

Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority
Minutes of the December 6, 2005, Meeting

Chairman John Clark called the meeting to order. Members present were John Clark, Harley Snyder, Ned Ruff, Gus Olympidis, Bill Joiner, Lou Martinez, and Howard Cohen. It was noted that a quorum was present. Tim Sanders, Executive Director, and Attorney David Hollenbeck also were present. Others in attendance included John Swanson, Kathy Dubie, Paul Lewis, Dennis Rittenmeyer, Nat McKnight, Keith Benman, Keith Matasovsky, Vince Galbiati, Tom Drake, Ron Johnson, Jared Forte, Roxann Brown, and Steve Walsh.

On a motion by Howard Cohen and a second by Bill Joiner, minutes of previous meetings were approved.

Chairman Clark discussed the transportation summit held in Merrillville on November 21, 2005. He thanked Mr. Sanders for his excellent presentation on the RDA at that summit.

Mr. Clark reported that he and Mr. Sanders recently attended a meeting of the Greater LaPorte Chamber to discuss LaPorte County's consideration of joining the RDA. It was noted that LaPorte County already works with Porter and Lake Counties in many areas.

Mr. Clark said that Mr. Sanders is working with members of Congressman Visclosky's staff on a timeline for funding. Future RDA meetings could include a presentation by Congressman Visclosky and/or his staff to explain what they expect. Mr. Clark added that the toll road, etc. could be future topics that influence the RDA.

A discussion regarding proxy votes followed. Attorney Hollenbeck said the statute does not allow for a proxy. He added that the statute would need to be changed in order to allow a vote by telephone. Mr. Hollenbeck also said that no examples allowing for a vote by telephone exist. Ned Ruff said the by-laws committee should deal with this type of specific problem. Attorney Hollenbeck said that the by-laws must be within state law. Harley Snyder sees this problem as one that is important enough for both Hollenbeck and the Attorney General's office to explore further. This matter will be referred to the by-laws committee.

Some discussion followed regarding LaPorte County and the possibility of the RDA being expanded.

Lou Martinez, Nominating Committee Chairman, reported that he and committee members, Bill Joiner and Ned Ruff, have met and are prepared to make the following nominations: Martinez moved, Joiner seconded, for Vice-Chairman, Gus Olympidis, and Secretary/Treasurer, Howard Cohen. Mr. Martinez said these are annual terms beginning January 1, 2006, with the statute requiring one officer from Lake County and one officer from Porter County. Without further discussion, the motion passed.

Bill Joiner reported on the status of the banking work group. He said the RFP was sent out to about 25 financial institutions on November 23, and the responses are due on December 13. The group will meet prior to the RDA's January meeting and will make a recommendation at that time. Mr. Joiner said they will be looking at the site to deposit funds. Attorney Hollenbeck added that there are Indiana statutes that control investment mechanism. Mr. Joiner further explained that all banks in Lake and Porter Counties were sent the RFP. Disbursement procedures will be discussed at a later date. He believes that the statute explains the flow of money. Attorney Hollenbeck and the office of the Attorney General will research that further. However, Attorney Hollenbeck also stated that the RDA must have an account set up before any money can be received.

Howard Cohen reported on his attendance at a recent Metropolitan Planning Council meeting. The group is very interested in the RDA and would like to be kept informed. John Swanson, NIRPC, said the MPC is not a governmental agency, it is a citizens advisory group in Illinois.

Regarding the co-counsel agreement, David Hollenbeck reported that he is working with the Attorney General's office as of December 1, 2005. Mr. Olympidis asked that the agreement be modified to include accessibility to the attorney by all board members as well as the executive director. Attorney Hollenbeck encouraged all members to call him at any time. On a motion by Bill Joiner and a second by Lou Martinez, the board unanimously approved the agreement as modified.

Regarding the creation of a By-Laws Working Group, Attorney Hollenbeck said he created a draft, drawn from the enabling statute and other samples he has. He is willing to work with the group, but there will be policy issues for the group to resolve. On a motion by Ned Ruff and a second by Harley Snyder the RDA will have a by-laws committee. Ned Ruff will serve as Chairman with Howard Cohen, Harley Snyder, and Gus Olympidis serving as members. The motion passed.

The creation of a Consultant RFP Working Group was discussed. Consideration of utilizing the consultant which NIRPC will be using followed. However, the members agreed that the RDA must go further than where NIRPC's study will end. After further discussion, Ned Ruff suggested that consultants be invited to speak and present their perspectives, plans, etc. He wondered if the RDA members needed to be trained to get different perspectives. Mr. Cohen said they need external help. After further discussion, Tim Sanders was asked to locate consultant groups willing to talk to the RDA. It was also agreed that Howard Cohen will draft a paragraph/page indicating what they want the consultants to talk about. Committee members will work with Mr. Sanders on this.

Mr. Sanders, Executive Director, reported that he recently attended the Interfaith Federation's annual meeting and learned that the organization is very interested in working with the RDA. Mr. Sanders also spoke to several organizations, including one in Illinois.

Gus Olympidis said the members have received a list of clients from Mr. Hollenbeck but are still waiting for information from the Attorney General. Gordon White, office of the Attorney General, said they represent all state agencies but not private individuals.

Regarding the Office Manager position currently being advertised, Mr. Sanders said the salary range is between \$40,000 and \$50,000.

Bill Joiner asked if the RDA is covered by the state's liability insurance. Mr. White said they are.

Public Comments:

Mr. McKnight asked about the possibility of LaPorte County joining the RDA. Mr. Clark said they are aware of the special opportunity they currently have.

Roxann Brown suggested that meeting notices be sent to the local Chancellors.

On a motion by Bill Joiner and a second by Howard Cohen the meeting was adjourned.